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Agenda item 8

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur: Mrs. Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

Addendum

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999 (item 4 (a))

Section 13. Human settlements

1. At its 15th meeting, on 19 June 1997, the Committee considered section 13, Human settlements, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/52/6 (Sect. 13)).

Discussion

2. A number of delegations expressed support to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) as the coordinator of the activities of the United Nations in the field of human settlements and its role as a source of technical assistance to Member States.

3. Several delegations welcomed the commitment of the Centre to implement fully the recommendations contained in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (A/51/884).

4. Some delegations noted that the programme of work was to be revised in the light of the reduced level of extrabudgetary resources approved by the Commission on Human Settlements at its sixteenth session. Some delegations considered that priorities should be set within each subprogramme.

5. Several delegations observed that the streamlined new subprogramme structure would enable the Centre to focus on fewer programme areas leading to better delivery capacity. Some delegations expressed their appreciation for the inclusion of self-evaluation mechanism at the subprogramme level.

6. A number of delegations expressed concern that executive direction and management was top-heavy and that the resources allocated to it seemed too high. Some delegations were of the view that the proposed staffing table under extrabudgetary resources should be reviewed downward. Other delegations sought explanation as to what constituted "other" extrabudgetary expenditures ($45 million) under table 13.2 of the fascicle. They were informed that that referred to operational projects, carried out through funding from UNDP ($36 million), and other sources ($9 million), as reflected in table 13.1 under extrabudgetary resources.

7. Some delegations underlined the need for a clearer information dissemination strategy, both in print and electronic format, including the possibility of regrouping under subprogramme 4, Assessment, monitoring and information, all information dissemination activities carried out by the Centre.

8. A number of delegations noted that the programme narrative of the section made no reference either to the countries with economies in transition or to setting up pilot projects to stimulate development in those countries.

9. Some delegations emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination with other United Nations bodies and organizations, particularly the Commission on Sustainable Development and UNDP.

10. Some delegations noted that the reference to "partners and civil society" in the last sentence of paragraph 13.22, should have been worded in accordance with the terminology used in existing mandates. Some delegations were of the view that the reference to "the realization of the human right to adequate housing" in the same sentence did not fully reflect the agreement reached during the sixteenth session of the Commission, and proposed that the word "progressive" be inserted before the word "realization".

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The Committee recommended to the General Assembly that it approve the programme narrative of section 13, Human settlements, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999, subject to the following modifications:

(a) In paragraph 13.4, in the Spanish version, the word "ecologicos" should be replaced with the word "ambientales" and the word "vigilar" with "supervisar";

(b) In paragraph 13.22, the word "partners" should be replaced with the words "local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector".